

REMARKS

This Reply and Amendment is intended to be completely responsive to the Office Action mailed on April 7, 2006.

Claims 1-77 are pending in this Application. Claim 74 has been allowed. Claims 1-5, 20-22, 25-28, 30, 35-37 and 59-63 currently stand rejected. Claims 7-15, 38-47, 50, 53, 54, 58 and 65-71 are objected to. Claims 6, 16-19, 23, 24, 29, 31-34, 48, 49, 51, 52, 55-57, 64, 72-73 and 75-77 are currently withdrawn from consideration.

Independent Claims 1 and 59 have been amended to recite subject matter that the Applicant believes is allowable and overcomes the rejections. Dependent Claims 38 and 50 have been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of base Claim 1. Dependent Claims 7 and 65 amended have been cancelled without prejudice to further prosecution on the merits.

The Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present Application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Allowed/Allowable Subject Matter

In Section 9 of the Office Action, the Examiner stated that Claims 74 is allowed. The Applicant thanks the Examiner for the allowance of Claim 74.

In Section 10 of the Office Action, the Examiner stated that "Claims 7-15, 38-47, 50, 53-54, 58 and 65-71 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 1:

Independent Claim 1 (as amended) includes all of the limitations of dependent Claim 7, as indicated to be allowable by the Examiner. Dependent Claim 7 has been canceled without prejudice to further prosecution. Dependent Claims 2-6, 8-37, 48-49 and 54-58 depend from independent Claim 1 (as amended). The Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of Claims 1-6, 8-37, 48-49 and 54-58.

Claim 38:

Dependent Claim 38 (as amended) has been rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of base independent Claim 1, as indicated to be allowable by the Examiner. Dependent Claims 39-47 depend from independent Claim 38 (as amended). The Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of Claims 38-47.

Claim 50:

Dependent Claim 50 (as amended) has been rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of base independent Claim 1, as indicated to be allowable by the Examiner. Dependent Claims 51-53 depend from independent Claim 50 (as amended). The Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of Claims 50-53.

Claim 59:

Independent Claim 59 (as amended) includes all of the limitations of dependent Claim 65, as indicated to be allowable by the Examiner. Dependent Claim 65 has been canceled without prejudice to further prosecution. Dependent Claims 60-64 and 66-73 depend from independent Claim 59 (as amended). The Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of Claims 59-64 and 66-73.

Claim Objections

In Section 4, the Examiner objected to dependent Claim 8 based on an informality.

The Applicant has amended dependent Claim 8 in the manner suggested by the Examiner to address the informality.

The Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the objection to dependent Claim 8.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

In Section 5, the Examiner rejected Claims 1, 5, 22, 26, 59 and 63 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,935,035 (“Schmidt”).

The Applicant submits that the amendments to the claims (as previously described) have overcome the rejections and that the Claims are allowable. The Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and allowance of Claims 1, 5, 22, 26, 59 and 63.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

In Sections 6-8, the Examiner rejected Claims 2-4, 20-21, 25, 27-28, 30, 35-37 and 60-62 as being unpatentable over Schmidt and/or U.S. Patent Nos. 6,691,809 and 6,578,648.

The Applicant submits that the amendments to the claims (as previously described) have overcome the rejections and that the Claims are allowable. The Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) and allowance of Claims 2-4, 20-21, 25, 27-28, 30, 35-37 and 60-62.

Request to Reinstate Currently Withdrawn Claims

The Applicant respectfully submits that the all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance. The claims that are currently withdrawn from consideration, i.e. Claims 6, 16-19, 23, 24, 29, 31-34, 48, 49, 51, 52, 55-57, 64, 72-73 and 75-77, all depend from Claims that the Applicant believes are now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Applicant requests reinstatement, reconsideration and allowance of Claims 6, 16-19, 23, 24, 29, 31-34, 48, 49, 51, 52, 55-57, 64, 72-73 and 75-77.

* * *

The Applicant respectfully submits that each and every outstanding objection and rejection to the pending claims has been overcome, and that the Application is in condition for allowance. Claim 74 has been allowed. The Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of Claims 1-6, 8-64, 66-73 and 75-77.


The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview or Examiner's Amendment would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 06-1447. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 06-1447. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, the Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 06-1447.

Respectfully submitted,

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